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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 NEA-10 IO-12 ADP-00 EURE-00 INRE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 EB-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 GAC-01 MBFR-03 SAJ-01

STR-08 RSR-01 /139 W
---------- 000928
O R 061837 Z APR 73
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9030
INFO AMEMBASST ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
USMISSION BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA BY POUCH
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG BY POUCH
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SAIGON BY POUCH
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV BY POUCH
AMEMBASSY TOKYO BY POUCH
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA BY POUCH
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USNMR/ SHAPE
ZNE/ AMCONSUL BORDEAUX BY POUCH
AMCONSUL LYON BY POUCH
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE BY POUCH
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE BY POUCH
AMCONSUL NICE BY POUCH
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 9775

3. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOF, PFOR, FR
SUBJECT: MICHEL JOBERT, NEW FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER

GENEVA FOR US DEL SALT
HELSINKI FOR US DEL MPT
VIENNA FOR US REP MBFR

REF: PARIS 9617

1. SUMMARY. SURPRISE APPOINTMENT OF MICHEL JOBERT, SECRETARY- GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY, PUTS FOREIGN POLICY APPARATUS EVEN MORE CLOSELY THAN HITHERTO UNDER CONTROL OF POMPIDOU. TOTALLY DISCREET, EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT, AND UNFAILINGLY LOYAL TO POMPIDOU, JOBERT IS ARCHETYPAL SENIOR FRENCH CIVIL SERVANT. HE HAS HAD IMMENSE INFLUENCE IN GOF BOTH AT POLITICAL LEVEL AND ON ADMINISTRATIVE SIDE THROUGH HIS PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT, HIS PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE, AND BECAUSE OF HIS OFFICIAL POSITION. ASIDE FROM FURTHER STRENGTHENING CONTROL OF ELYSEE OVER FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS, JOBERT' S APPOINTMENT MAY HELP TEMPER SOME OF GISCARD' S ECONOMIC VIEWS WITH WHICH POMPIDOU DOES NOT ALWAYS AGREE. JOBERT' S PRAG- MATISM AND MODERATION SHOULD BENEFIT US, ALTHOUGH HE WILL BE A TOUGH DEFENDER OFFRENCH INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

2. MICHEL JOBERT WAS BORN OF FRENCH PARENTS IN MOROCCO IN 1921 AND GRADUATED FROM SCIENCES PO- LITIQUES AND ENA, TWO INSITUTIONS THAT PROVIDE
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FRANCE' S ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL ELITE. HE

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FIRST WORKED AT COUR DES COMPTES, HIGH- LEVEL AUD-
ITING OFFICE, AND ONE OF MOST PRESTIGIOUS GOVERN-
MENT SERVICES, AND THEN SERVED IN SEVERAL MINISTERIAL
CABINETS BETWEEN 1952 AND 1961. THESE INCLUDED
CABINETS OF PIERRE MENDES- FRANCE AND OTHER RADICAL
PARTY MINISTERS. HE JOINED POMPIDOU' S CABINET IN
1963, AND BECAME SECRETARY- GENERAL (I. E. TOP CIVIL
SERVANT) OF THE PRESIDENCY WHEN POMPIDOU WAS ELECTED
IN 1969. MARRIED TO AN AMERICAN, JOBERT NONETHELESS
SPEAKS ONLY HALTING ENGLISH. HE HAS A SON ATTENDING
AMERICANSCHOOL OF PARIS.

3. JOBERT IS NEARLY ARCHETYPAL EXAMPLE OF SENIOR
FRENCH CIVIL SERVANT. HE IS IMMENSELY INTELLIGENT,
DISCREET, AND EXTREMELY SELF- EFFACING. VERY MUCH
A " BACK ROOM BOY," HE ESCHEWS FORMAL PUBLIC APPEAR-
ANCES AND IS UNCOMFORTABLE IN CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS--
SOMEWHAT OF A HANDICAP FOR FOREIGN MINISTER. HE HAS
HAD GREAT INFLUENCE ON FORMULATION OF POLICY
THROUGH POMPIDOU' S WILLINGNESS TO USE HIM BOTH AS
SOUNDINGBOARD AND FILTER, AS WELL AS RESPECT IN
WHICH MINISTERS HAVE HELD HIM. HE ALSO HAS WIELDED
ENORMOUS INFLUENCE ON ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY OF
GOF THROUGHHIS POSITION. HIS CAREER HAS ADVANCED
THROUGH PRIVATE OFFICES OF MINISTERS RATHER THAN
THROUGH FORMAL HIERARCHY OF CIVIL SERVICE.

4. ALTHOUGH LITTLE IS KNOWN OF HIS PERSONAL
POLITICAL IDEAS, HE WAS AT ONE TIME CLOSE TO FORMER
RADICAL PREMIER PIERRE MENDES- FRANCE AND REPORTEDLY
SHARED SOME OF HIS POLITICAL VIEWS. JOBERT HAS
MAINTAINED GOOD RELATIONS WITH MENDES AND OTHERS
OF SIMILAR LEFT AND CENTER POLITICAL ORIENTATION,
BUT HIS LOYALTY TO PRESIDENT POMPIDOU IS ABSOLUTE.
IN ANY CASE HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXECUTE POMPIDOU' S
POLICIES AS FAITHFULLY AS DURING HIS TENURE AT
ELYSEE. APPROACH HE TAKES TO SPECIFIC ISSUES OF
FOREIGN POLICY WILL BE THAT OF PRESIDENT POMIDOU:
DEEP CONCERN ABOUT AMERICAN ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL
POWER, COMBINED WITH A DESIRE FOR GENUINELY CLOSE
RELATIONS WITH THE US, EMPHASIS ON PRESERVATION OF
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FRENCH " INDEPENDENCE," A " SLOW" APPROACH TO THE
CREATION OF A UNITED EUROPE, A DESIRE THAT AMERICAN
TROOPS REMAIN IN EUROPE, CONCERN OVER CURRENT MONE-
TARY CRISIS AND US INTENTIONS IN TRADE NEGOTIATIONS,
AND SUSPICION OF USSR. HIS APPOINTMENT IS UNLIKELY

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TO RESULT IN ANY NEW FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES, UN-
LESS DIRECTED BY THE PRESIDENT. (SOMETHING WE DO
NOT FORESEE IN NEAR TERM AT LEAST.)

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 NEA-10 IO-12 ADP-00 EURE-00 INRE-00

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H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 EB-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 GAC-01 MBFR-03 SAJ-01

STR-08 RSR-01 /139 W
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O R 061837 Z APR 73
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9031
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSON GENEVA BY POUCH
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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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AMEMBASSY TOKYO BY POUCH
AMEMBASSY VIENNA BY POUCH
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AMCONSUL STRASBOURG BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PARIS 9775

5. JOBERT' S APPOINTMENT CAME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE. IT WOULD SEEM TO BE DUE LARGELY TO POMPIDOU' S DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN CONTROL OF FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION THAT HAS RESIDED IN ELYSEE UNDER FIFTH REPUBLIC BY PUTTING SOMETIMES RECALCITRANT FOREIGN MINISTRY BURAUCRACY IN FIRM HANDS. AS AN ELYSEE MAN, JOBERT WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO RESPECT PRE-EMINENCE OF THE PRESIDENT IN FOREIGN POLICY FIELD THAN WOULD APOLITICICIAN WITH HIS OWN POWER BASE. (WE UNDERSTAND POMPIDOU COULD NOT DECIDE ON THE " RIGHT" POLITICIAN AND THEN TUNED TO JOBERT.) KNOWING JOBERT' S PENCHANT FOR RUNNING A TIGHT SHIP, POMPIDOU IS PROBABLY COUNTING ON HIM TO ENSURE THAT GOF SPEAKS WITH ONE VOICE ABROAD.

6. AN ADDITIONAL REASON FOR JOBERT' S APPOINTMENT CONCERNS HIS KNOWLEDGE AND SOUND JUDGMENT IN ECON-OMIC MATTERS, INCLUDING FOREIGN ECONOMY POLICY. IN A YEAR WHICH IS ALREADY DOMINATED BY ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, POMPIDOU PROBABLY WANTS A STRONG AND TRUSTED VOICE AT THE QUAI TO TEMPER GISCARD' S VIEWS, WITH WHICH POMPIDOU IS NOT ALWAYS IN AGREE-MENT.

7. IN SUM, JOBERT' S PRAGMATIC AND GENERALLY MODER-ATE APPROACH SHOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO US INTERESTS, PARTICULARLY IN FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY, SINCE HE WILL TEND TO NEUTRALIZE THE RIGID GAULLIST ORTHODOXY OF THE QUAI WHICH POMPIDOU NEVER ENTIRELY SUCCEEDED IN CONTROLLING DURING SCHUMANN ' S TENURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO EXPECT ANY SOFTENING OF FRENCH POLICIES ON TRADE AND MONETARY

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QUESTINS UNDER JOBERT, SINCE POMPIDOU HAS BEEN
MAKING THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS IN THESE AREAS SINCE
AUGUST 1971.
IRWIN

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Subject: MICHEL JOBERT, NEW FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER
TAGS: PFOR, PGOF, FR, (JOBERT, MICHEL)
To: AMEMBASST ANKARA
ATHENS
BERLIN
BONN
BRUSSELS
COPENHAGEN
DUBLIN

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